

forward to turning to it as soon as possible after House action. I will have more on that later.

We are also working to wrap up a number of conference reports, including for the Defense authorization bill and the Water Resources Development Act.

Last night I took the next step on the Defense conference report so we can pass it this week. This legislation will provide more of the tools service-members need to take on national security challenges, help strengthen our military posture, and support our men and women in uniform with the benefits and pay raises they have earned.

I hope the Senate will also take the next step soon on the Water Resources Development Act conference report. This water resources conference report will invest in our Nation's waterways infrastructure, enhance commerce, and support safe and reliable water sources to prevent future situations, such as the one we saw in Flint, MI. To that point, this bill also includes assistance for families such as those in Flint who have already been impacted by lead poisoning.

#### TRIBUTE TO DAN COATS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we all remember where we were on September 11, 2001. The man we honor today certainly does. He was in Berlin. He had only just begun his second day as Ambassador to Germany, and then everything changed.

Planes smashed into the World Trade Center. Terrorists attacked the Pentagon, where his son-in-law worked. Thankfully, his family emerged unbroken that day. Others were not so fortunate.

Ambassador COATS found himself thrown into a role he couldn't have foreseen a day earlier, a role in which he would excel but one that would forever change him. Those who know DAN COATS say that day in September affected him profoundly. It shook him as a father, it sharpened him as a policymaker, and it clarified the stakes and his sense of responsibility.

He may not have known it then, but he would feel the tug of that responsibility many years later and answer the call.

Senator COATS had enjoyed a successful congressional career when he decided to retire in 1998. He earned a reputation for working hard, getting things accomplished, becoming an indispensable member of his conference. In fact, after DAN announced his decision not to seek reelection, then-Majority Leader Trent Lott rang him up and said: "You can't leave," Lott recalled saying. "I can't go forward in the Senate without you."

DAN's success was no accident. He learned the legislative ropes working for an up-and-coming Congressman named Dan Quayle. He applied that knowledge as he progressed from Quayle's staffer to Quayle's successor, first in the House, then in the Senate.

This was evident whether DAN was refocused on rebuilding the military after the Cold War, bringing opportunity to low-income families and children, even dissecting the finer points of American garbage policy—yes, garbage policy.

Toward the beginning of DAN's time in the Senate, Hoosier landfills were filling with New Jersey trash, and Hoosiers were fed up. So in came DAN with a war cry—"Don't dump on us!"—and just the right blend of determination, legislative know-how, and humor to capture the attention of colleagues and the hearts of constituents.

Some were unamused in DC or Trenton, but back in Indiana, Hoosiers were over the Moon. For many, their first introduction to this plucky new Senator came through his famous Senate trash ad, the Coats for Senate commercial, which featured a cigar-chomping garbageman from Jersey, earned DAN a place in the hallowed halls of campaign legend—and perhaps a ticket back to the Senate.

While Senator Lott may not have been able to persuade DAN to run for reelection 8 years later, he did offer this prophetic statement as he bid him farewell:

[Dan Coats] is leaving the Senate, but he is not leaving us.

I have a feeling that he is going to have a real influence in many ways for the rest of his life, and he is going to stay close to all of us.

How right he was.

Fast forward to just over a decade later, former Senator COATS looked out and saw a country in crisis, adrift on the world stage, stagnant at home, and sliding into despair. DAN was deeply unsettled. He shared his concerns with his wife Marsha. He realized he had two choices. He could sit back and watch or he could do something.

DAN COATS chose to do something. His election was hardly a sure thing. He pulled through anyway. When he returned to the Capitol, he put his head down and he got right to work. DAN can be a man of few words. He doesn't always feel the need to speak up, but when he does, people pay attention. It is a true mark of distinction in a body such as this with its big egos and sharp elbows.

People listen to this former Ambassador when he explains the ins and outs of foreign policy. People listen to this veteran of previous health care debates when he dissects the problems of ObamaCare.

When this fiscal expert shares his waste of the week, people pay attention. It is how we learned taxpayer dollars were being spent on Swedish massages for bunny rabbits. It is how we discovered taxpayer money was being wasted to determine whether "hanger," that is "hunger" plus "anger," is a real thing.

Senator COATS knew he wasn't going to solve all of our Nation's problems as one Senator in one term, but he understood the important contributions he

could make. He also recognized his responsibility to make them. In the process, he cemented a legacy that will long outlast him in the Senate. It will certainly continue on in my office. My own chief of staff, Sharon Soderstrom, is a Coats alum. Speaker RYAN's chief of staff, Dave Hoppe, is another Coats alum. The list of Coats staffers who have gone on to achieve great things—from former White House chief speechwriter Michael Gerson to incoming Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb—is as long as it is impressive.

I know DAN is looking forward to spending more time at Wrigley Field after he retires. Here is the tweet DAN sent out last month: "A century in the making, we finally made it. What a great day to be a Cubs fan."

It is hard to overstate the importance of the moment for him. I mean, this is a guy who spent part of his honeymoon—his honeymoon—at Wrigley Field. So I wonder if maybe, just maybe, he was able to see a little of himself in his favorite team—maybe in a guy like fellow Indiana University Hoosier Kyle Schwarber—a standout player who stepped away from the game for a season and then came back and picked right up where he left off without a hitch, knocking it out of the park just when his team needed him most.

DAN promises he is not coming back a third time. We will see. It is obvious DAN never needed the office or the title—not the first time, not the second time, not a third time.

That said, I know DAN isn't going to stop caring. I know he isn't going to stop working. So we are going to keep the DAN COATS "bat signal" plugged in. Should the people call out for a hero yet again, I hope our friend will suit up one more time because, if nothing else, we are really going to miss him.

So let us recognize and congratulate Senator COATS for his many years of service. Let us wish him well in his latest retirement, and let me personally thank him for his wise counsel and trusted friendship.

I will miss you, my friend.

#### TRIBUTE TO MARK KIRK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Senator MARK KIRK has never been one to be intimidated by a challenge. He is willing to work hard even when the going gets tough. He never shies away from a tough debate, and he always comes prepared. He has been defying the odds for a long time and inspiring others along the way.

Nearly 5 years ago, Senator KIRK suffered a debilitating stroke—one that threatened to end his Senate service nearly as soon as it had begun. In the blink of an eye, KIRK went from juggling constituent meetings and committee hearings to lying in a hospital bed wondering if he would ever walk again or talk again or read again.

If Senator KIRK had decided to just quit the Senate and focus on his recovery, no one would have blamed him.